



Action Research Project Presentation

Steve Johnson

January 2025



**I am an AL at
London College of Fashion**

**I teach Drawing and Digital Communication
across 7 courses and all years, BA and MA**

**I have a Fine Art background, and my skillset includes
both analogue and digital techniques**

SOCIAL JUSTICE AIMS

My **Action Research Project** focuses on addressing the **Social Justice** issues of

- **Student Inclusion,**
- **Digital Equity and the broader access to technology,**
- **Digital Literacy,**
- **Sustainability**

I want to do this by increasing student engagement in sessions in which they learn **Digital Skills** such as working with Adobe Illustrator, and **creating and preparing Digital submissions** of Portfolios, Sketchbooks etc.

ARP FOCUS

- * Digital Skills alone are not enough
- * I will contextualise Digital Skills within students' overall creative practice
- * Analogue > Digital > Analogue process
- * 'Thinking through Drawing'

THINKING THROUGH DRAWING

Experiential Learning Approach, referring to Carl Rogers' principles

Methodology:

- **Integrate** Analogue Drawing in Digital Technical Skill sessions.
- **Encourage** enquiry through media, not just techniques or effects.
- **Explore** mediation as a creative process, drawing on Marner, Örtengren, and Wertsch's theories of tools and language shaping action.

SESSION ACTIVITIES

Methodology:

- **10 minute Analogue Drawing** exercise at the beginning of Adobe Illustrator sessions focussed on making Technical Drawings of garments
- I emphasise **Drawing as a Process, not a Result** to encourage students to focus on being creative

THINKING THROUGH DRAWING

Integration of Analogue Drawing:

- Bridge between intuition and computation.
- process over result.
- Contextualises

Teaching Strategies:

- ambiguity to foster exploration, interpretation, and reflective practice.
- Promote a Growth Mindset.
- Shift focus from rigid technical proficiency to iterative, discovery-driven design processes.

Resonance with Action Research:

- Prioritises process over results too.
- Also encourages reflective practices.

THINKING THROUGH DRAWING

Theoretical approaches

- Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle
- Kolb's Learning Styles (Diverging, Assimilating, Converging, Accommodating) highlight individual preferences but lack robust empirical support (Pashler et al., 2008).

Ambiguity in Learning:


- David Horton (2017): Ambiguity in drawing fosters active meaning-making and deeper engagement by challenging cognitive expectations.
- Rohlf's (2023): Ambiguity promotes iterative learning and creative risk-taking.



analogue

digital

equally good ways of creative working



Thinking
through
Drawing

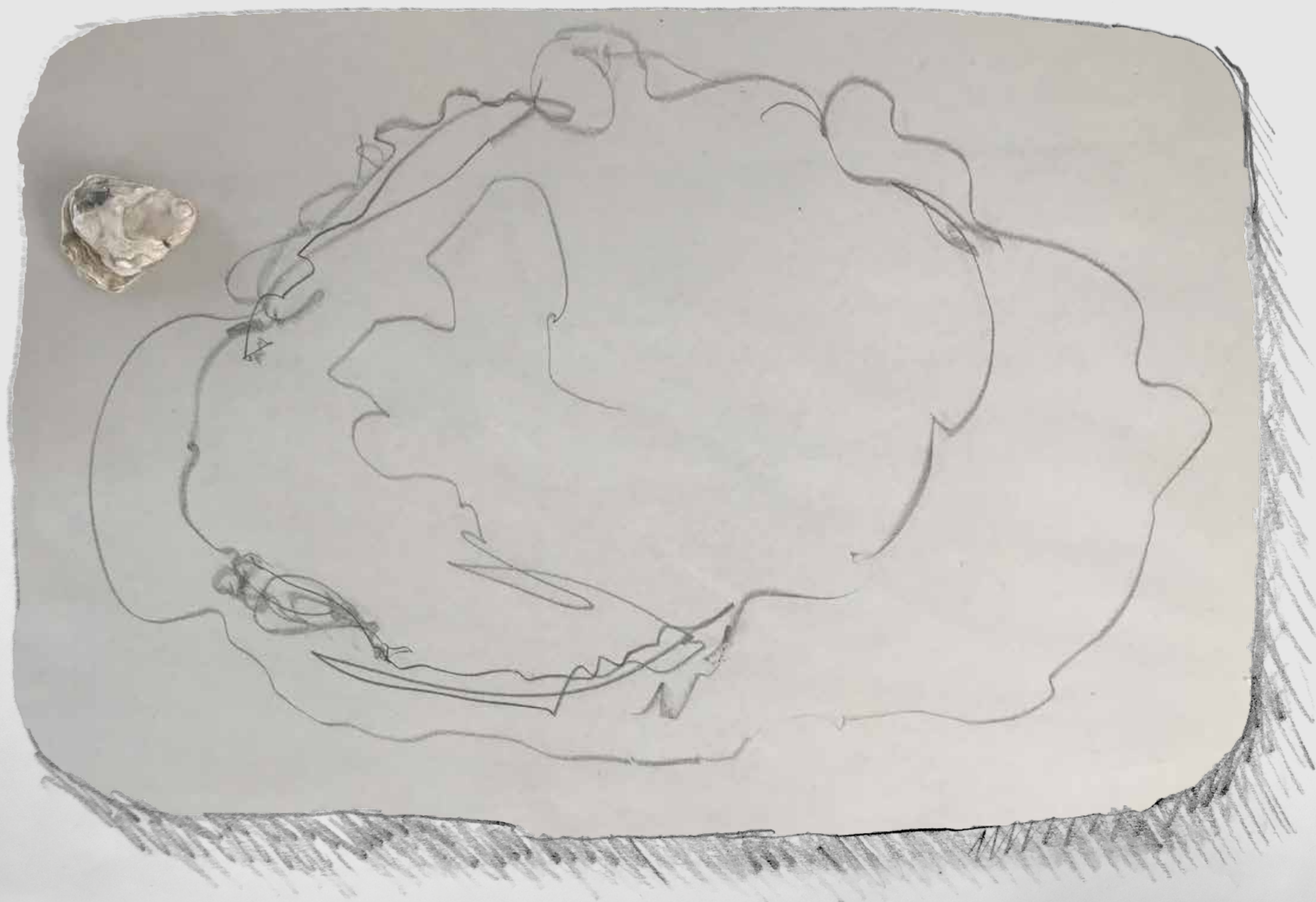


Warm-up Drawing exercises

You will need 6 pieces of A3 paper and a Graphite Stick.
Please stand up if possible to make it an active exercise.

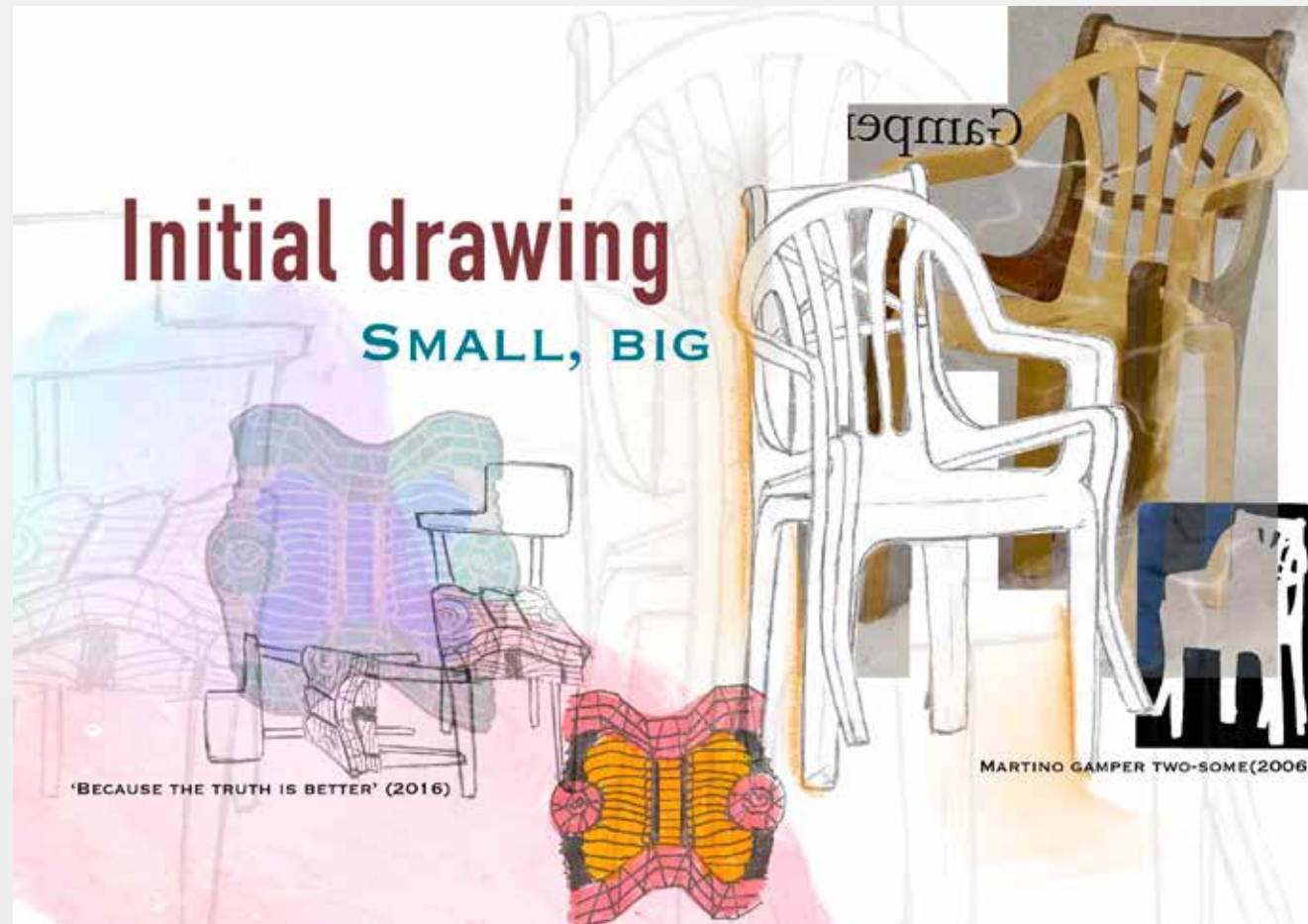
Use your whole arm as well as your elbow and wrist.
Remember, each mark is like a question, not an answer!

- 2 x 10 seconds, looking at the object not the paper.
- 1 x 30 seconds, looking at the object not the paper.
- 1 x 30 seconds, looking at the object not the paper, continuous line.
- 1 x 2 min, looking at the object not the paper, continuous line.
- 1 x 2 min, eyes closed, feeling the object.





example of portfolio page using analogue and digital methods
after 'Intro To' sessions



Yinka Ilori

TTD REFERENCES

Thinking Through Drawing (www.thinkingthroughdrawing.org)

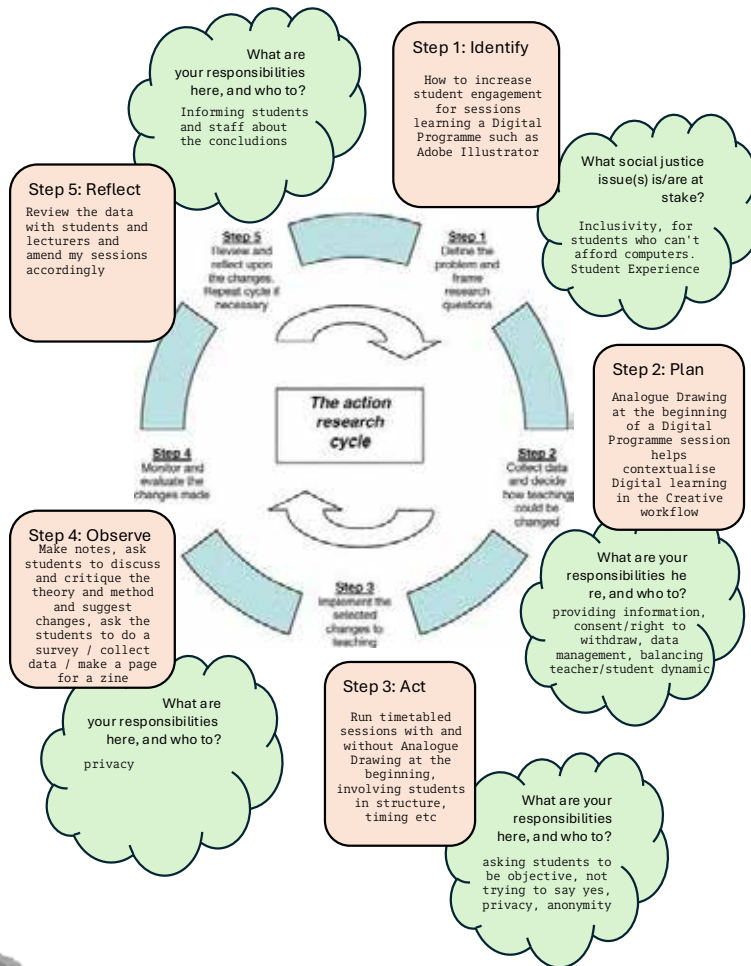
'Drawing Futures' Symposium (2016)



ARP SPIRAL

Action Research Cycle

(based on McNiff and Whitehead 2009)



- Jean McNiff's Action Research Project paper

- Refinement Process:

Key Peer Feedback and Ideas for Expansion

- Kayal: Toolkit Development: Potential to make ARP outcomes accessible to other educators through workshops.
- Sabrina: Modes of Making: Explored how analogue practices inform access to diverse modes of learning, linking creative exploration with technical proficiency.

ARP RESEARCH QUESTION

My Action Research Project focusses on addressing the Social Justice issues of Student Inclusion, Digital Equity, Digital Literacy and the equitable broader access to technology and Sustainability, by increasing student engagement in sessions in which they learn Digital Skills such as working with Adobe Illustrator, and preparing Digital submissions of Portfolios, Sketchbooks etc.

I want to emphasise and show objectively that Digital Skills alone are not enough to produce a good standard of work for Submission, and by extension for students' career in industry.

I intend to do this by contextualising Digital Skills within students' overall creative practice, modelling a creative workflow from Inspiration to Development and finally Realisation using a circular Analogue > Digital > Analogue process, more specifically using the approach of 'Thinking through Drawing'.

BERA STATEMENT

The Ethical Action Plan helped me revise the Research Question, and plan, including an Ethical Framework, adhering to BERA Ethical Guidelines (2024) for research:

1. **Informed Consent**
2. **Transparency**
3. **Confidentiality**
4. **Respect for Autonomy**
5. **Minimising Workload**
6. **Ethical Data Collection**
7. **Debriefing & Feedback**
8. **Non-Curricular Project**

DATA FORMAT

Why a Questionnaire?

- Reviewed potential methods: Interviews, Semi-Structured Interviews, Questionnaires, Field Notes, and Observation.
- Preferred focus groups for their social, interactive nature but lacked time to arrange due to teaching commitments and students' workload.

Decision to Use Questionnaires:

- Practical for time constraints and student schedules.
- Online format accommodated student availability and submission deadlines.
- Concerned about response bias (e.g., only keen students participating).

Strategies for Effective Questionnaire Design (Converse & Presser, 2011)

DATA DESIGN

- **Bespoke Tailoring students**
- **Year 2 was my Focal Group, also used Year 1 and Year 3**
- **Developed tailored questionnaires for each year group to accommodate their varying levels of experience.**
- **Shared the questionnaire draft in a PgCert group tutorial.**
- **There were still amendments to be made when I did the online questionnaire, such as adding Likert scales rather than simple Yes / No multiple choice questions.**

ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

Link to the **Year 1** online questionnaire:

www.forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=xClkjH8We0e4y3fugnWNESqVNd4Wti9EkNSk_g4UuoRUMVnKOEsaNTRBWDBSSsBYNE9RRDlxSVBCOC4u

Link to the **Year 2** online questionnaire:

www.forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=xClkjH8We0e4y3fugnWNESqVNd4Wti9EkNSk_g4UuoRUNsNV0UE40UhWTDk2RVBEMEdKU0o0VVSQSS4u

Link to the **Year 3** online questionnaire:

www.forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=xClkjH8We0e4y3fugnWNESqVNd4Wti9EkNSk_g4UuoRURjAxQVVXNsRFRE00SVJYSIhUWU9NVDNYMS4u

The Questionnaires and samples of emails sent to students are also available as PDFs on my Blog

REFLECTIONS ON COLLECTING DATA



REFLECTIONS ON COLLECTING

Challenges Faced:

- Submission deadlines
- Potential skew from engaged, friendly students. I tried to encourage all students to respond, especially if they have any constructive criticism.
- Concern over students feeling obligated to please the tutor despite anonymity assurances.

Key Observations:

- Some students were comfortable being non-anonymous.
- I plan to email students a thank-you at the start of Spring term.
- Bringing biscuits (students seem to like Bahlsen chocolate biscuits the best) to show appreciation.

REFLECTION ON DATA

Response Rates:

- Year 1: 7 out of 34, **21%**.
- Year 2: 7 out of 34, **21%**.
- Year 3: 5 out of 34, **15%**

Key Concerns:

- Low rates.
- Less engaged students
- Length and complexity discouraged detailed responses, especially for Year 2 where there was only one comment; Year 1 and Year 3 provided more comments despite lower/comparable response rates.
- Submission deadlines

Improvements

Diversify Delivery Methods: Combine printed and digital surveys; use in-session opportunities.

- Address Biases: Engage less responsive students through incentives.
- Pilot surveys with students to resolve issues before wider distribution.

READING INTO DATA

I chose Thematic Analysis, remembering the Importance of researcher involvement: I am part of the process, not standing objectively outside of it. (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

- Social Research: A Practical Introduction (Curtis & Curtis, 2021).



FORMATTING AND ANALYSING

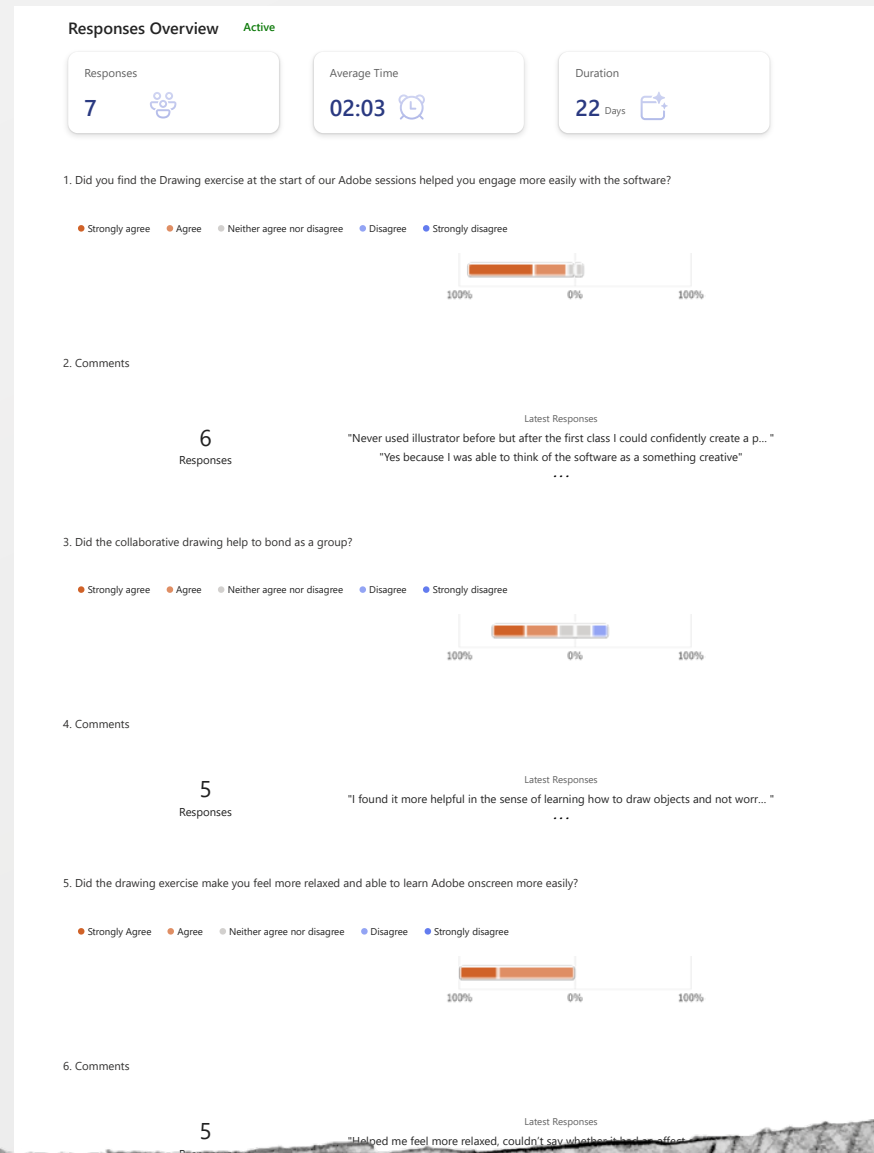
Each Year group:

- 1. Raw data downloaded from Microsoft Forms**
- 2. Responses visualised**
- 3. Analysed question by question**
- 4. Analysed by Year**
- 5. Analysed overall**

FORMATTING AND ANALYSING

Each Year group:

1. Raw data from Microsoft Forms



FORMATTING AND ANALYSING

Each Year group:

2. Responses formalised and visualised

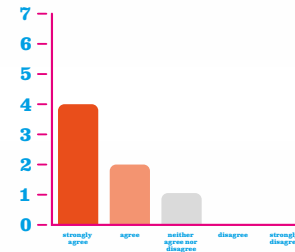
Questionnaire Year 1 responses

Question 1

1. Did you find the Drawing exercise at the start of our Adobe sessions helped you engage more easily with the software?

7 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	Strongly agree
2	anonymous	Strongly agree
3	anonymous	Strongly agree
4	anonymous	Neither agree nor disagree
5	anonymous	Agree
6	anonymous	Strongly agree
7	anonymous	Agree



2. Comments

6 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	Lovely
2	anonymous	it helps me shift gently into the session ready to learn.
3	anonymous	Helped set my mind for the creative thinking aspects of illustrator
4	anonymous	I wouldn't say that it directly helped me engage more with the specific software, however I think it helped me engaged more with the class as a whole
5	anonymous	Yes because I was able to think of the software as a something creative

FORMATTING AND ANALYSING

Each Year group:

3. Analysed Question by Question

Questionnaire Analysis – Year 1

Question 1

Did you find the Drawing exercise at the start of our Adobe sessions helped you engage more easily with the software?

From data:

86% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, which strongly suggests the drawing directly helped Adobe learning in the sessions.

Only 1 respondent was neutral, so no respondents found it was detrimental to the Adobe learning.

This reinforced my epistemological findings, nothing unexpected in the data or comments.

From comments:

Divided 3:2 between comments that found the Drawing exercise created a calm atmosphere, and those that found it directly made a positive connection with the Adobe software.

This could be investigated further – why for each.

calm = 3

- *'it helps me shift gently into the session ready to learn.'*
- *'Helped set my mind for the creative thinking aspects of Illustrator'*
- *'I wouldn't say that it directly helped me engage more with the specific software, however I think it helped me engaged more with the class as a whole'*

help with Adobe = 2

- *'Yes because I was able to think of the software as a something creative'*
- *'Never used Illustrator before but after the first class I could confidently create a pattern on a model of a body.'*

FORMATTING AND ANALYSING

Each Year group:

4. Analysed by Year

Questionnaire Analysis – Year 1

Overall Analysis

The response rate was 7 out of 34, 21%.

This suggests the keen and friendly ones filled in the form, and may not be a representative sample.

Generally the Drawing exercise at the beginning of the session was a positive experience for the respondents, apart from the one who stated that they didn't like their fellow students, so that is a personal issue and anomaly.

I am glad that I included a comments box, and that the student used it to detail why they gave a negative comment so I could see it was an anomaly, and not related to my Drawing exercise, so I could discount it. In future I will always include a comments box for this reason.

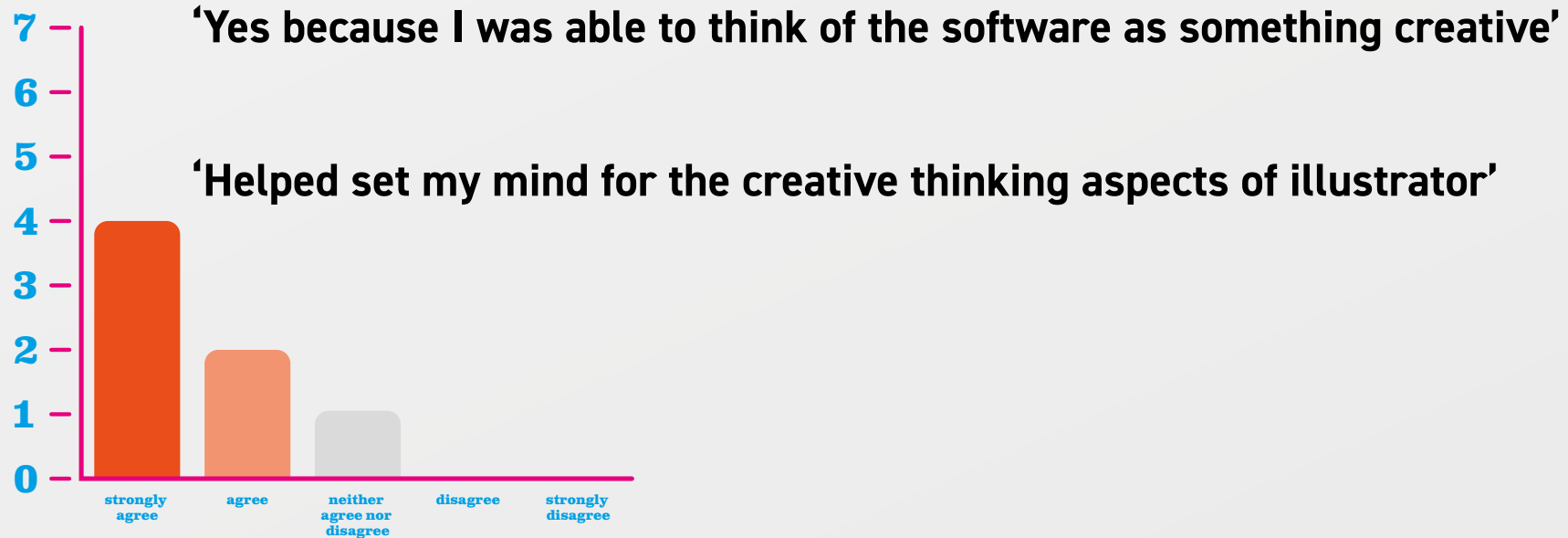
I could investigate further whether it relaxed the students generally for the session and so promoted engagement, or whether it helped them directly engage with the Adobe software, or if it is a mix of the two.

OVERALL ANALYSIS

- Analogue Drawing fosters deeper engagement and creative exploration

Example: Year 1, Question 1:

Did you find the Drawing exercise at the start of our Adobe sessions helped you engage more easily with the software?

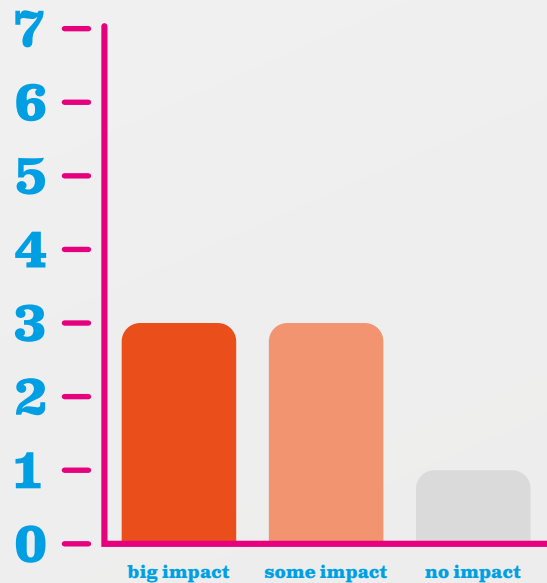


OVERALL ANALYSIS

- Helps students view Digital tools as integral, not intimidating, parts of the creative process.

Example: Year 2, Question 18:

What impact, if any, did the analogue drawing activity have on your overall confidence when engaging with digital tools?

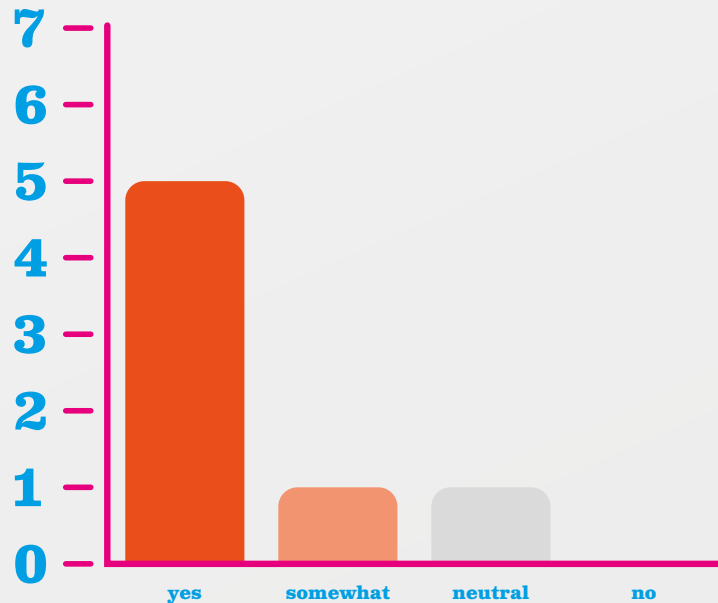


OVERALL ANALYSIS

- Promoted confidence, inclusion, and community across student cohorts, especially Yr 2.

Example: Year 2, Question 14:

Did the collaborative drawing activities (using one large piece of paper) increase the sense of community and group bonding compared to the individual drawing activities?



OVERALL ANALYSIS

- Year 3 enthusiasm for integrating drawing into the design process, especially in 'Concept Development'.

Example: Year 3, Question 1:

Did you find the Drawing session helped to increase creative ideas for your presentation?



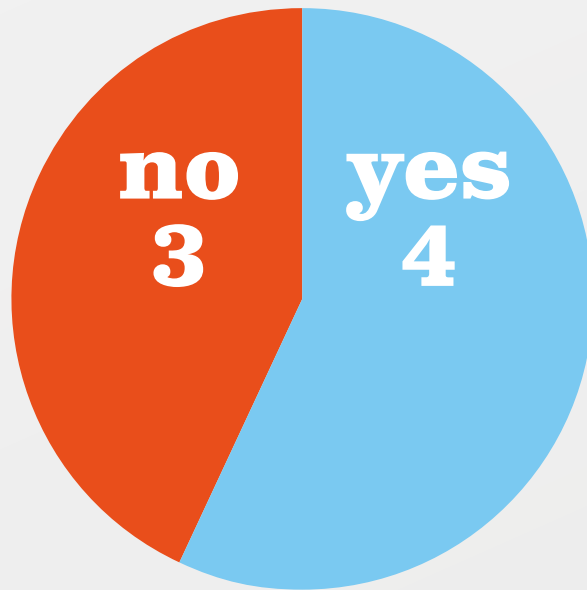
'After giving feedback, Steve gave a drawing class where we used our own 3d work to draw from. More of this would be helpful at the beginning of the design process as it sparks new ideas.'

OVERALL ANALYSIS

- Barriers to technology and drawing accessibility requires further investigation

Example: Year 2, Question 3:

Did you experience any challenges or barriers during the drawing or digital activities (e.g., physical, technical, or learning-related challenges)?

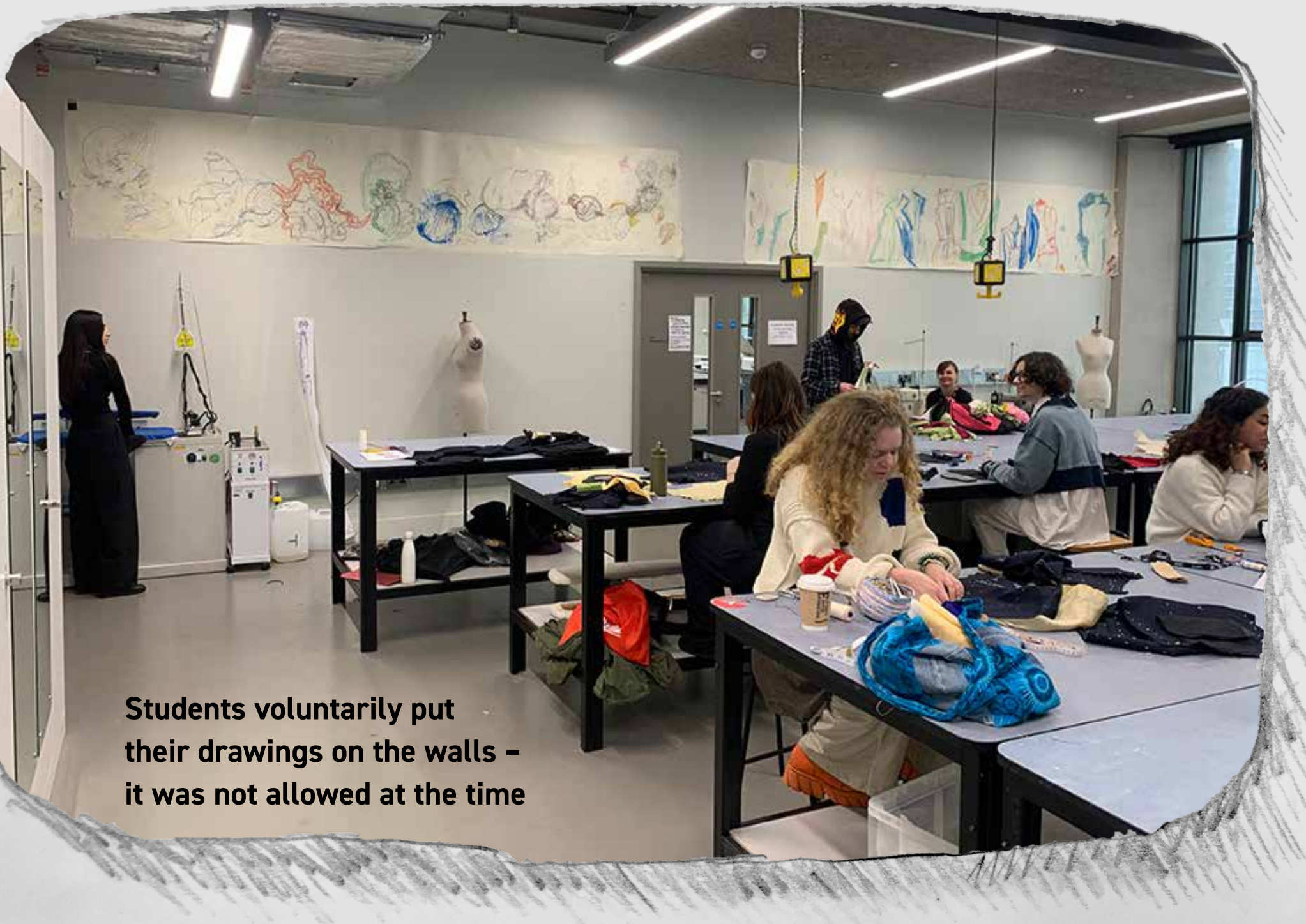


Even though there was a space for comments, none were given so I am not sure if this relates to Analogue or Digital barriers – this is an area which requires more investigation.

OVERALL ANALYSIS

Azleen Henry Masih, a Bespoke Tailoring tutor, kindly gave me her analysis with LOs

- **There is a clear shift in students stylistic confidence.**
- **The students' approach to experimentation has encouraged illustrations with stronger contextual realisation, where there is bolder conviction.**
- **The impact of the analogue drawing activities, I have observed in our students work, is the elevated quality in fluency of the 2D-3D dialogue of visual communication.**

A photograph of a fashion design studio. Several students are seated at long black tables, working on clothing. In the foreground, a student with long blonde hair is focused on a piece of blue and yellow fabric. Other students are visible in the background, some standing and some sitting. The walls are covered with large, colorful drawings and sketches. A mannequin is visible in the background. The room has large windows on the right side and a door in the center. The lighting is bright, coming from overhead fixtures. The entire image is framed by a hand-drawn, sketchy border.

**Students voluntarily put
their drawings on the walls -
it was not allowed at the time**

OVERALL ANALYSIS

Brief overview, the detail is on the blog.

All Years

- Analogue Drawing fosters deeper engagement and creative exploration.
- Helps students view Digital tools as integral, not intimidating, parts of the creative process.
- Promoted confidence, inclusion, and community
- Year 3 enthusiasm for integrating drawing into the design process.
- Barriers to technology and drawing accessibility requires further investigation.

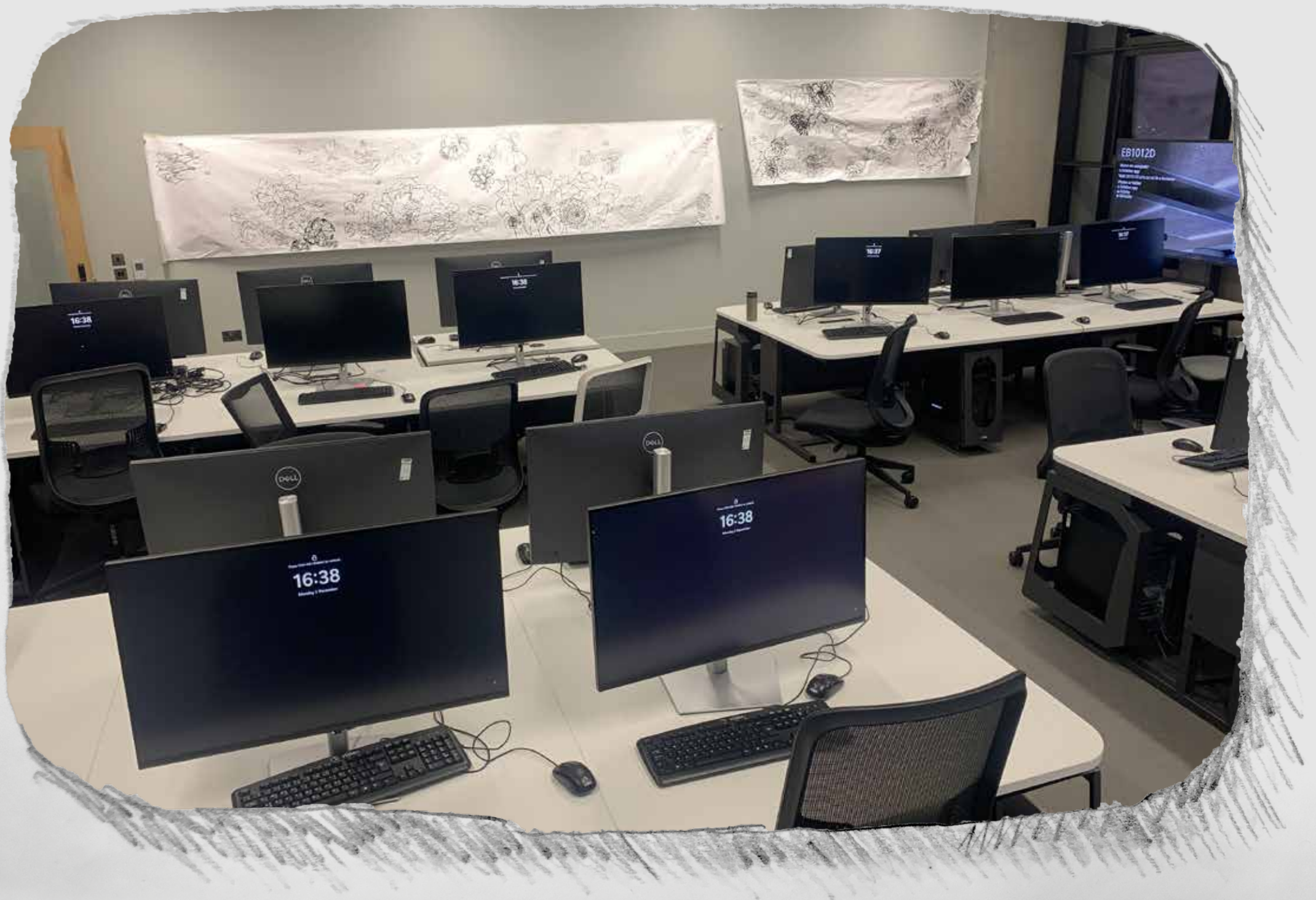
SHORT CONCLUSION

- A process-oriented, Analogue-to-Digital approach can create inclusive, engaging, and effective learning environments.
- It addressed Social Justice issues of Student Inclusion, Digital Equity, Digital Literacy, and Sustainability.
- Integrated an Analogue-to-Digital workflow to enhance engagement in Digital skill sessions.

FUTURE

Exploration of Social Justice Goals:

- Track and assess Digital Literacy development across Year 1 to Year 3.
- Investigate how collaborative drawing compares with individual drawing with regard to learning Digital Skills, and group bonding
- **Displaying** Analogue work alongside Digital and physical outputs enhances creative workflows and maintains creative connections, giving all students confidence in their work.
- **Testing** and scaling the toolkit for broader educational application.
- Discussion-led, inclusive sessions foster peer-to-peer learning and creativity but also I need to **recognise** diverse learning preferences to foster confidence: structured objectives and open learning.



REFLECTIONS ON ARP

- Topic was larger than manageable within the timeframe.
- Investigated only one element: the effect of Analogue Drawing in Technical Sessions.
- Positioned as part of an ongoing ARP spiral for larger investigations.
- Surveys should be concise, targeted, and administered earlier in the term.
- Online surveys support anonymity but could be complemented with in-session time for completion.
- Need to engage a broader range of students, not just the engaged ones.
- Writing blog posts helped formalise and organise thoughts effectively.

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THANKS

Students' creativity and openness

Tutors

Peers

